



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.7946 | FAX (517) 373.2678
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/stamas/

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Contact: Chad Wing
(517) 373-7946

Governor's veto slams the brakes on speedy justice for residents of Clare and Gladwin counties

LANSING — The governor's veto last week of House Bill 5480 denies residents of Clare and Gladwin counties the right to have their cases heard as quickly as possible, Tony Stamas, R-Midland, and Sens. Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau, said.

The bill would have added an additional circuit court judge in the 55th Circuit, which covers Clare and Gladwin counties, as recommended by the independent, nonpartisan Michigan Supreme Court's State Court Administrative Office.

Instead the governor has decided to play politics, vetoing the bills because Democrats want more judgeships in Wayne County than the State Court Administrative Office recommended in its 2003 Judicial Resources Report, McManus said. Wayne County, however, has seen its population fall in past years.

"This area is growing rapidly and so is the court's docket," Stamas said. "The caseload clearly shows how much people in this area need an additional judge to hear cases and deliver justice in a timely manner," Stamas said.

"The governor has done a disservice to the residents of Clare and Gladwin counties with her veto by choosing politics over people," McManus said. "She knows how much an additional judge is needed in this area."

In the 2003 Judicial Resources Report, the administrative office only recommended a circuit or district court add a judgeship if at least two additional judges were needed. The report uses data such as court caseloads and other objective data to determine where judgeships should be added or removed.

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